



County of San Diego

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The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program

WHAT IS THE FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM?

FSS is a program to help Section 8 participants develop and continue educational and career goals. Participants are encouraged to seek training or education that will enable them to work or improve their current employment situation. This program is a five-year plan.

DO YOU HAVE REFERRALS FOR EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROGRAMS?

Yes, your FSS Coordinator may be able to assist you with referrals, but you are responsible for registering for classes and paying for all fees. You could be eligible for financial aid, so be sure to look into that option. If you don't know where to find classes, look into Regional Occupational Programs (ROP), Adult School classes or your local community college. These are low cost options or there is financial aid available.

CAN YOU HELP ME WITH CHILDCARE COSTS?

No, not directly. You will need to find your own child care provider and pay them, however, your child-care costs will be taken into consideration in the calculation of your portion of the rent. For help finding a childcare provider or to get on a subsidized program, please call (800) 481-2151.

I HAVE AN EDUCATION ALREADY, IS FSS FOR ME?

Anyone receiving rental assistance who wants to go to work or improve his or her work situation is an excellent candidate for this program.

WHAT IS THE ESCROW ACCOUNT?

When your rent changes, your new income is compared to your income at the time you joined FSS. If your earned income has increased and your net adjusted income has increased, the savings to the Housing Authority is deposited into an escrow account. These deposits continue monthly until your income and portion of the rent changes, and then your escrow deposit is recalculated. The process continues for the duration of your contract.

WHEN DO I START TO ACCUMULATE THE MONEY? HOW DO I KNOW HOW MUCH I HAVE?

Your escrow account starts to accumulate money when your portion of the rent increases due to an increase in earned income after you start participating in the FSS program. At least once a year, the Housing Authority will inform you of the balance in your escrow account.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO RECEIVE THE FUNDS IN MY ESCROW ACCOUNT?

You must complete the goals you identified when you executed your FSS contract. In addition, you must not be receiving any kind of welfare benefits for the last twelve months of your contract. That means no Cal-Works or General Relief for the last twelve months of your contract.

WHAT IF I DON'T MEET MY GOALS OR I AM STILL ON HOUSING AT THE END OF MY CONTRACT? WILL I LOSE MY RENTAL ASSISTANCE?

If you don't meet your goals, and you are eligible to continue receiving rental assistance, your assistance will continue. You must remain eligible for the Section 8 program at all times to continue participating in FSS. Any money in your escrow account is returned to the Housing Authority to be used for rental assistance payments for other participants.

DOES MY MINOR CHILD WHO IS ON SSI AND MEDI-CAL NEED TO BE OFF IN ORDER FOR ME TO RECEIVE MY ESCROW ACCOUNT?

If you receive SSI on behalf of a minor child, you may receive your escrow account funds if all other terms of the contract are fulfilled. If the Medi-Cal your child receives is linked to his/her SSI you are okay.

WHAT IF I MAKE SO MUCH MONEY THAT I GO OFF SECTION 8 BEFORE THE END OF THE FIVE YEARS, AM I STILL ELIGIBLE FOR THE ESCROW ACCOUNT FUNDS?

You could be. It depends on how your assistance is terminated and if you are receiving any welfare benefits at the time. You could complete your contract and receive the funds in your escrow account.

WHAT IF SOMEONE MOVES IN WITH ME AND THEY MAKE TOO MUCH MONEY? WILL I LOSE MY ESCROW ACCOUNT FUNDS?

That depends on if your rental assistance continues or not and whether or not you are receiving welfare benefits.

WHAT IF CONGRESS TERMINATES THE PROGRAM, WILL I STILL GET MY ESCROW FUNDS?

That depends on the guidelines the Housing Authority receives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), if the FSS program is terminated.

WHAT'S THE CATCH? WHAT WILL I LOSE IF I PARTICIPATE?

There is no catch. You will not lose your Section 8 rental assistance because of anything you do related to the FSS program. Just remember to keep your Housing Specialist informed of any changes you have (within fourteen days). You have nothing to lose, and everything to gain!

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Included in this packet is an application for the FSS program. Just fill it out and return it to your Housing Specialist. An FSS worker will contact you in a few weeks.

CAN I START THIS PROGRAM AT ANY TIME?

Yes, just call your Housing Specialist and leave a message that you are interested. However, before you can start your FSS contract, your income information may need to be updated if it has been more than three months since your last recertification or if there have been any changes.